

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 2, 2015

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, Town Hall with the following members present: J. Denneen, M. Iwanowicz, J. McDermott, P. Hinton, A. Walsh, D. Bruce, M. Trudell, C. Lane, A. Healy, T. Williams, S. Lawson, D. Crowley, A. Walsh, 7:20 p.m. A. Ragosta. Absent was J. Lowre. Also in attendance was Town Administrator J. Johnson and Fire Chief T. Bailey.

7:00 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman D. Bruce.

May 4, 2015 Spring Annual Town Meeting

Veterans Services

J. Cogan, Veterans Agent spoke to this budget. Budget is basically level funded with the exception of an increase in Veterans Benefits from \$55,000 to \$63,000. Town receives 75% of this money back from the Department of Veterans Services. Last year Town received \$36,873 in reimbursement. Total amount to date spent is \$44,054.75, 56,371.16 projected for FY2015. He might need a Reserve Fund Transfer in the future for any shortfall in benefits.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Veterans Services Budget in the amount of \$115,725, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Council on Aging

C. Sullivan, Director spoke to this budget. Council provides social, recreational and educational activities for seniors and provides advocacy and assistance to the Walpole elders and their families. Staff consists of Director, Outreach Worker, and three van drivers.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Council on Aging Budget in the amount of \$187,575, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

7:20 p.m. – Committee Member A. Ragosta

Board of Health

R. Chapell, provided to the Committee updates on what the Board of Health has been doing in the prior year. Last two compliances checks for tobacco were 100%. They have 150 medical core volunteers, do training for flu clinics assistance with over 40 volunteers. In addition they apply for grants that might be available.

Professional Services/Agency – Department now contracts with the VNA to provide services in the amount of 18 hours a week within the Town of Walpole, providing public health services and works with seniors. Benefits will be paid for by the VNA. Will also provide assistance with the Medical Reserve Corp. In addition will be available to seniors on the phone within certain hours for questions and concerns and will also help with public housing inspections. This will be a one year contract, which will be rewritten if they are satisfied if it works out. Position will be located in COA or Board of Health Office. Walpole is the first community to do it this way.

Animal Inspector is appointed by the Board of Health, Works with large animals, chickens, barns, etc. and deals with rabies issues. Town does have animal regulations.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Board of Health Budget in the amount of \$300,987, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Article 18 – Revolving Funds

J. Johnson spoke to this article. This article authorizes the use of certain revolving funds, credited with receipts from certain revenue sources, to be expended under the authority and direction of certain agencies or officials. Finance Director M. Thompson provided updated information on the balance in the Revolving Funds.

Recreation Department update – prior director didn't work out and department is receiving assistance in the amount of 15 hours per week on a temporary basis from a retired Recreation Director. Town is in the process of looking for a new Director, this will be posted next week. Council on Aging Director is also providing assistance to the department. Recreation Committee is an advisory board only. Major audit had been done a couple of years ago and none of the suggestions have been implemented to date. Committee requested that it be provided periodic updates on the department and when the issues would be resolved.

Turco Field – Anticipated cost to do over the field would be \$500,000. They are trying to set aside \$50,000 each year in the Capital Budget to go into this account to do this. Recreation Committee is also bumping up the fees for usage. Track has a longer life span than the field.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on Article 18, reauthorizing the spending of the Revolving Funds listed, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Insurance

Town Administrator updated the committee on the proposed changes in insurance from West Suburban Health to MIIA. Walpole is the only community at this time that is going to MIIA from West Suburban Group. MIIA does a number of towns, and presently provides the town's property and casualty insurance. Assessments in the amount \$38,000 and losses were very favorable, anticipated drop next year. Casualty Increase/Worker's Comp. Includes coverage to the schools and municipal 15% mitigation on savings that will be distributed among the employees that have health insurance and will be decided upon by the representatives of the town employees, a safety committee. Police and Fire has a 10% increase, which is standard and there is a \$10,000 deductible. Building claims amounted to \$5,000. Employment Retirement Assessment number has been confirmed and part of it is the OPEB Liability.

Employment Retirement Assessment

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on Employee Retirement Assessment in the amount of \$4,280,000, Motion passed (13-0-1) (J. Burke abstained) (14 voting)

Unemployment

\$200,000 being requested, level funded. Town Administrator is comfortable with this number. Present balance in this account is \$141,000.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Unemployment budget in the amount of \$200,000, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Employee Fringe Benefits

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Denneen, Seconded by P. Hinton for Favorable Action on the Employee Fringe Benefits in the amount of \$9,650,887, Motion Passed (13-0-1) (J. Burke abstained) (14 voting)

Casualty Insurance

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Casualty Insurance Budget in the amount of \$899,200, Motion Passed (14-0-0)(14 voting) (Unanimous)

Schools

The meeting with the School Department for this evening was cancelled, and another date will be set up. Chairman Bruce has spoken to the Chairman of the School Committee P. Shields, and School Department is looking into ways for additional funding, looking to an increase in athletic fees and school lunches. Town needs to decide what type of education they want offered. Art and music are credited parts of the curriculum. Any members having questions, send to D. Bruce and he will send them to the Superintendent. Committee members requested that any information packets from the schools be forwarded to them in advance by at least one meeting. Committee also requested the amount the School Department receives in grants and outside funds. This may not be obtainable for School Committee. Athletics receives additional money through booster clubs, etc.

Phones – School Department has requested through the Capital Budget \$245,000 for the replacement of the district wide phones. Many questions on whether or not this expenditure could be done cheaper, did the School Department receive bids for these phones, it appears that there was only one quote received from Hewlett-Packard. Town should try to get the best value for the money.

Facilities Tour Update

Chairman reported that members of the Committee had toured the Police and Fire stations on Saturday, February 28 and it was a good visit and an eye opener on the condition of these facilities. Any questions or suggestions, members should speak to the Chiefs. Discussion ensued that if there is no new facility being built, the Town will need to spend money on improvements to the present fire station facilities and money should be put in the Capital Budget for these improvements.

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m., Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Secretary

